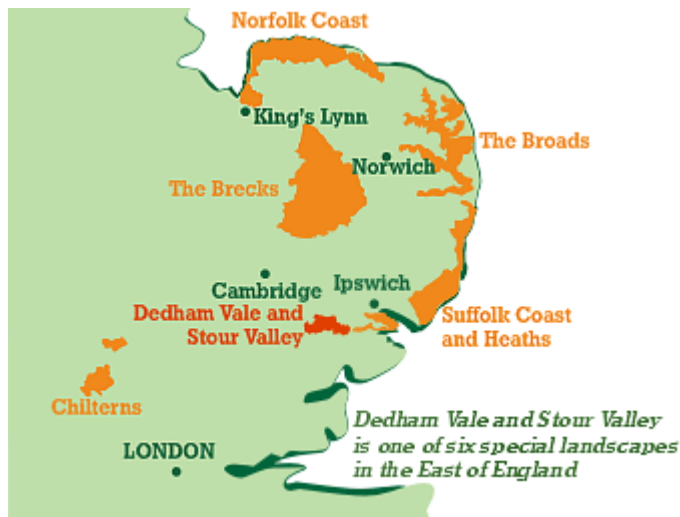


CAR@FREE in Dedham Vale and Stour Valley

A day walking through Constable Country



ONE OF A SET OF
CAR FREE ITINERARIES
IN THE EAST OF
ENGLAND'S SPECIAL
LANDSCAPES

- Relaxed walk through the area where Constable lived and painted
- Visit Flatford and Dedham, joined by the tranquil River Stour
- Includes a shorter stroll and details of local attractions.
- Why not leave the car at home and pick up the route at Manningtree rail station

Constable Country is situated in the picturesque Dedham Vale; one of the special landscapes designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The rolling farmland, ancient woodlands and picturesque villages of Dedham Vale have inspired artists and painters, including John Constable, who was born in the area and painted many of his works there.

This compact area is perfect to explore on foot. You can visit the locations Constable painted and the places he lived or just enjoy strolling through this fine example of an English lowland landscape.

Constable Country is easily accessible on foot from Manningtree rail station. Alternatively, you can leave your car in one of the car parks at East Bergholt, Flatford or Dedham and take in the countryside at the pace that Constable did himself.



The River Stour



Flatford Mill



The village of Dedham

CONTENTS:

- THE ITINERARY – Details of the routes that you can follow and places you can visit
- ITINERARY LISTINGS – Contact information for local businesses mentioned in the itinerary
- ADDITIONAL LISTINGS – Other useful contact details
- HOW TO GET THERE – Public transport options for getting to Constable Country

THE ITINERARY

This itinerary makes a great day out in Constable Country. There are many places to visit along the route and a short cut is included. We recommend that you also use the suggested accompanying literature detailed in 'Additional information sources' below. Towards the end of the itinerary section there are details of places to visit on the route and information on refreshments, activities and accommodation.

Walk overview

The walk is divided into 4 SECTIONS. The first section links Manningtree rail station to Flatford. The next two sections of the walk form a circular route, from Flatford to Dedham and then back to Flatford. The walk can be picked up at Flatford, Dedham, East Bergholt and Manningtree.

- **SECTION 1.** Manningtree Station to Flatford. Approximately 40 minutes walk.
- **SECTION 2.** Flatford to Dedham walking to the north of the River Stour. This takes around 45 minutes. There is also an option to visit East Bergholt which is close by.
- **SECTION 3.** Dedham back to Flatford to the south of the River Stour. Around 30 minutes.
- **SECTION 4.** Retrace your steps to Manningtree station using the path in SECTION 1. Around 40 minutes.

Additional information sources

It is possible to follow this route without a map but it is recommended that you obtain the following leaflets in advance or at Flatford Visitor Information centre:

- **Constable Country 'Keep it Special'** visitor guide – available free at Visitor Information Centres. The leaflet can also be downloaded via the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project website: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
- **Welcome to Flatford leaflet** – The National Trust – a free guide to Flatford – available from the National Trust shop & Bridge Cottage at Flatford and at the Flatford Visitor Information Centre.

If you are planning to explore further afield, you may wish to carry a copy of the relevant Ordnance Survey map for the area:

- Ordnance Survey Explorer sheet 196 - Sudbury, Hadleigh and Dedham Vale.

THE ITINERARY

The route in detail

SECTION 1. Manningtree station to Flatford

As you leave the station turn right and head down the slope to the car park. Turn left and take the path across the grass marked 'To Flatford and Dedham'.

Turn right and follow the track that runs parallel to the railway line. You will come to a junction in the lane. Take a right and walk under the railway bridge.

Follow the path for approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile. The path will then bear left and after another $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile it will turn to the right. After a short section you will arrive at a kissing gate. After this kissing gate you will be on a well-defined path that will lead to the river bank path. Turn left through another kissing gate and head off upstream on the river bank towards Flatford with the River Stour on your right.

After the next kissing gate turn right and head across the grass along the edge of a concrete flood protection barrier. Pass through another kissing gate and then follow the path along the river towards Flatford. You will see Flatford Mill across the water and then pass the boat lock. On arrival in Flatford, cross the bridge on your right and you will come to the thatched Bridge Cottage. This National Trust property is worth visiting to see the exhibition on John Constable.

This is where SECTION 1 of the walk ends. The Visitor Information Centre and public toilets are located in the barn style building, off the lane to your left. There are many sites of interest here in Flatford and it's worth taking the time to explore the following:

If you turn right you can make a short excursion to see the locations of some of Constable's most famous paintings. Follow the lane you will see the restored dry dock on your right, just past the tea rooms. This view is featured in Constable's 'Boat Building at Flatford'.

Continue along the lane passing Valley Farm on the left. As you arrive at Flatford Mill you will be at the site of one of Constable's most famous paintings, 'The Haywain' and will have a perfect view of Willy Lott's House. Flatford Mill, Valley Farm and Willy Lott's House are all owned by the National Trust and leased to the Field Studies Council who offer a wide range of environmental and arts based courses. As such, the buildings are not open to the public. Retrace your steps back to the thatched Bridge Cottage where SECTION 2 of the walk begins.

SECTION 2. Flatford to Dedham

With the river behind you and the lane stretching up the hill in front of you, follow the lane up hill passing the Visitor Information Centre on your right. When you reach the top of the lane, turn left and follow Flatford Lane.

After a short distance, there is a footpath to be found on the right hand side of the road which follows alongside the road behind the hedgerow and provides a pleasant alternative. Continue to the crest of the hill and take in the lovely view across the Dedham Vale on the left.

Turn left onto a footpath signposted down a hedged track (Fen Bridge Lane). If you don't turn left the road leads on to East Bergholt less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile away, well worth a visit if you have time (especially the Church and it's unusual bell cage).

As you walk down Fen Bridge Lane you will pass the setting of Constable's 1826 painting, 'The Cornfield'. This depicts a shepherd boy drinking from a stream while his flock strays towards the harvest field.

The lane crosses a watercourse (not the River Stour). After approximately 50 metres take a right at the 'Dedham' finger post. If you get to Fen Bridge over the River Stour you have come too far. However, Fen Bridge is an opportunity to take a short cut and walk back to Flatford (see 'Alternative Route' below).

THE ITINERARY

Follow the path through the trees and out into the open meadow. Continue to Dedham bridge. Cross Dedham bridge and this is where SECTION 2 ends.

Alternative route (short cut)

- Cross the River at Fen Bridge half way between Flatford and Dedham on SECTION 2 of the walk.
- Return to Flatford on the south side of the river picking up the route from Dedham to Flatford (SECTION 3).
- After you have crossed Fen Bridge you may want to take a short diversion in the direction of Dedham to look at the scene of one of Constable's paintings 'The Leaping Horse'.

SECTION 3. Dedham to Flatford

This section of the walk begins at the Dedham road bridge. Follow the road up to the village and turn left at the junction with the High Street. At the next corner of the road, take the footpath on the left marked 'Public footpath to Flatford'.

Follow this path down through kissing gates to the River Stour (ignore the path about half way down that is marked 'Flatford by Farm'). As you reach the river you will pass the setting of Constable's painting 'The Leaping Horse'. This is a peaceful route along a tranquil part of the river.

Continue along this side of the river to Flatford, ignoring the path left over Fen Bridge. You will arrive back at Flatford by Bridge Cottage.

SECTION 4. Flatford to Manningtree

From the river bridge at Flatford you can retrace your steps to Manningtree using the notes for SECTION 1. On arrival in Manningtree you can enjoy some well-earned refreshments at the Station Buffet at Manningtree Station or walk on into Manningtree itself where there is a selection of pubs and restaurants.

Places to visit on the route, refreshments, excursions and accommodation

This section contains details of the villages and points of interest along the route. Full contact details can be found in the Itinerary Listings section. If you are planning an activity it is important to call first and check availability and opening times as there are seasonal variations.

Manningtree

Manningtree is situated at the eastern end of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Reputed to be the smallest market town in the country, Manningtree is the gateway to Constable Country and is also a perfect base for exploring the Stour and Orwell river estuaries.

- Manningtree is well served with places to eat and stay. Why not make a break of it and stay overnight.
- Close to Manningtree is the RSPB Stour Estuary Nature Reserve at Wrabness. This is a great place to spot estuary birds.
- There is an accompanying itinerary available that is based in Manningtree (Exploring the Stour estuary).
- Cattawade Marshes RSPB reserve is situated adjacent to the A137. Although there is no public access to the marshes, excellent views can be obtained from the public footpath from Manningtree to Flatford.



Cattawade Marshes

THE ITINERARY

Flatford

Flatford is at the centre of “Constable Country”. The painter’s father was a successful miller and corn merchant and owned the mill at Flatford. This is where the artist painted a large number of his paintings and many of the scenes remain recognisable to this day.

- The National Trust Bridge Cottage is a restored 16th century cottage just upstream from Flatford Mill. It has a permanent Constable exhibition that includes prints and sketches of some of his most famous paintings.
- At Flatford it is possible to enjoy the valley from the river. You can get active and hire a rowing boat or take a half hour trip on an environmentally friendly electric powered craft.
- For details of other places of interest nearby it is worth stopping at the Visitor Information Centre. This is situated just opposite Bridge Cottage.
- The Field Studies Council has a centre at Flatford Mill. They offer a wide range of environmental and arts courses based in this idyllic setting.



Flatford

East Bergholt

The birthplace of John Constable, East Bergholt is a charming village easily accessible by taking a short excursion from SECTION 2 of the walk.

- The Church of St Mary the Virgin in East Bergholt has a very unusual Bell Cage in the churchyard where the bells are still rung by hand to this day.
- The graves of Constable’s parents can also be found here and a wall plaque commemorating the life of Constable’s wife Maria can be found inside the church. Visitors are made very welcome & refreshments are available from April to October on Mondays to Thursdays (10am –12.30).
- Constable was born in East Bergholt and lived there during the early part of his life before moving to London to pursue his painting career. The house is no longer standing, but a plaque indicates where it once stood on railings near to church.
- East Bergholt is a good place to buy a picnic or stop for refreshments in one of the pubs.



The Bell Cage, East Bergholt

Dedham

Dedham is a thriving village with beautiful listed houses, interesting shops and an excellent selection of places to eat, including The Essex Rose, a 16th century tea house. St Mary the Virgin Church on the High Street was built in the 15th century with money provided by a local cloth manufacturer. The tower is particularly imposing for a church of this size and features in a number of Constable’s paintings.

- Boat hire is available from the Dedham Boat Yard (by the road bridge).
- The Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum is about a ¾ of a mile walk from Dedham. You can visit the home, studios and grounds where he lived and painted for 40 years.
- The Dedham Art & Craft Centre, housed in the former church on the High Street offers arts and craft and a tea room/vegetarian restaurant.
- Dedham Parish Church is open every day and welcomes visitors. Look out for the original Constable painting inside the church.



Dedham High St

ITINERARY LISTINGS

Visitor Information

- **Flatford Visitor Information Centre** – Flatford Lane, Flatford, East Bergholt, Colchester, CO7 6UL. Tel: 01206 299460. Email: flatfordvic@babergh.gov.uk. Website: www.visit-suffolk.org.uk
- **Colchester Visitor Information Centre** – 1 Queen Street, Colchester, CO1 2PG. Tel: 01206 282920. Email: vic@colchester.gov.uk. Website: www.visitcolchester.co.uk
- **Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project** – Website: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
- **East of England Tourist Board** - Toppesfield Hall, Hadleigh, Suffolk, IP7 5DN. Tel: 0870 225 4800. Email: information@eetb.org.uk. Website: www.visiteastofengland.com
- **Essex Tourism** – Website: www.realessex.co.uk

Things to see and do

- **National Trust Bridge Cottage** – Flatford, East Bergholt, Colchester, CO7 6UL. Tel: 01206 298260. Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk. Flatford, the location for a number of Constable's paintings. Bridge Cottage houses a small exhibition on Constable and there is access to riverside walks from here. Guided walks are available during the summer (small charge). The tea room adjacent to Bridge Cottage offers refreshments. Opening times vary throughout the year as follows (for 2006): 1 March – 30 April 11-5 Wednesdays to Sunday, 1 May – 30 September 10.30 – 5.30 every day, 1 October – 29 October 11 – 4 every day, 1 November – 17 December 11-3.30 Wednesday - Sunday. Phone for 2007 opening times.
- **Field Studies Council, Flatford** - Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex, CO7 6UL. Tel: 0845 330 7368. Website: www.field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill/. The Centre offers a range of art and environment based short courses for leisure or professional development – residential accommodation for course participants is available at Flatford.
- **Rowing boat hire from Flatford** – Tel: 01206 298111.
- **River Stour boat trips from Flatford** – The River Stour Trust. Tel: 01255 676132. Website: www.riverstourtrust.org ½ hour round trips from Flatford to Fen Bridge on Sundays and Bank Holidays between Easter and mid- October (plus Wednesdays during August).
- **Church of St Mary the Virgin, East Bergholt** – The Street, East Bergholt, Suffolk, CO7 6TA. Website: www.eastbergholt-bells.org.uk. Refreshments available Monday – Thursday 10am-12.30pm from Easter to the end of October.
- **East Bergholt Place** –. East Bergholt Place, East Bergholt, Suffolk, CO7 6UP. Tel: 01206 299224. Website: www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk/east_bergholt_place.htm 15 acre garden and arboretum renowned for its fine collection of magnolias, camellias and rhododendrons – open daily from 1st March – 30th September 10am –5pm. Closed Easter Sunday. The neighbouring specialist plant centre 'The Place for Plants' is situated within the original walled garden and is open daily 10am – 5pm (dusk if earlier). Closed Easter Sunday.
- **RSPB Stour Estuary (Cattawade Marshes) reserve** – 01473 328006. Call for details of guided walks or visit the website: www.rspb.org.uk
- **Rowing boat hire from Dedham Boat Yard** – Boat hire, teas/coffees, ice creams. Tel: 01206 323153. Website: www.dedhamboathouse.com
- **Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dedham** – High St, Dedham. Website: www.dedham-parishchurch.org.uk
- **Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum** - Castle House, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6AZ. Tel: 01206 322127. Website: www.siralfredmunnings.co.uk. The home, studios and grounds where Sir Alfred Munnings KCVO lived and painted for over 40 years. Open Easter Sunday until the first Sunday in October between 2pm – 5pm on Sundays, Wednesdays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Also open 2pm – 5pm on Thursdays and Saturdays during August.
- **Dedham Art & Craft Centre** – High Street, Dedham, CO7 6AD. Tel: 01206 322666. Arts and craft housed in a former Congregational Chapel. Open 10-5.30 every day (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day). Website: www.dedhamartandcraftcentre.co.uk

ITINERARY LISTINGS

Where to eat and drink

- **The Sun Inn, Dedham** - High Street, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6DF. Tel: 01206 323351. Website: www.TheSunInnDedham.com. Email: enquiries@thesunninndedham.com
- **The Boathouse Restaurant, Dedham** - Mill Lane, Dedham, Colchester, Essex, CO6 7DH. Tel: 01206 323153. Website: www.dedhamboathouse.com. Email: dedhamboathouse@aol.com. Fax: 01206 322232.
- **Le Talbooth Restaurant**, Gun Hill, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6HP. Tel: 01206 323150. Email: talbooth@milsomhotels.com. Website: www.le-talbooth.co.uk.
- **National Trust Tea Rooms, Flatford** – East Bergholt, CO7 6UL. Tel: 01206 298260. Check website for opening times: www.nationaltrust.org.uk. Opening times as Bridge Cottage above.
- **Dedham Art & Craft Centre Tea Rooms** – High Street, Dedham, CO7 6AD. Tel: 01206 322677. A family run tea room offering a varied vegetarian menu.
- **The Essex Rose 16th Century Tea House** – High Street, Dedham, CO7 6DE. Tel: 01206 323101.

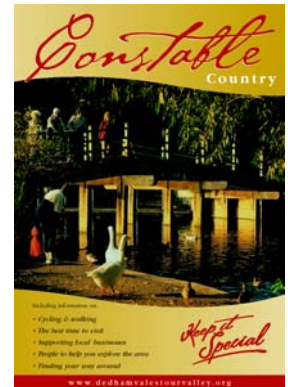
Where to stay

- **Rosemary bed and breakfast, East Bergholt** - ETC 3 Diamonds. Mrs N Finch, Rosemary, Rectory Hill, East Bergholt, CO7 6TH. Tel: 01206 298241.
- **Mays Barn bed and breakfast, Dedham** - ETC 4 Diamonds. Jean Freeman, May's Lane (off Long Road West), Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6EW. Tel: 01206 323191. www.btinternet.com/~mays.barn/
- **Stratford House bed & breakfast, Holton St Mary** – ETC 4 diamonds. Mrs Anne Selleck, Stratford House, Holton St Mary, Suffolk, CO7 6NT. Tel: 01206 298246. Email: fselleck@uwclub.net. Website: www.accomsuffolk.co.uk.
- **Milsom Hotels and Restaurants, Dedham** – ETC 3 star. Group Website: www.milsom-hotels.co.uk Tel: 01206 322795. Email: milsoms@milsomhotels.com.

ADDITIONAL LISTINGS

Other useful leaflets and information booklets available include:

- **Constable Country 'Keep it Special'** visitor guide – available free at Visitor Information Centres. The leaflet can also be downloaded via the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project website: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
- **Constable Country** – The National Trust – a detailed guide to the paintings of Constable set in the Dedham Vale. Available from the National Trust shop, Flatford.
- **Welcome to Flatford leaflet** – The National Trust – a free guide to Flatford available from Bridge Cottage & the National Trust shop at Flatford and at the Flatford Visitor Information Centre.
- **The Painters' Trail** – A 69 mile circular cycle route through the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley. The map and guide is available for £3.50 from the East of England Tourist Board on 0870 2254852 or from the Flatford Visitor Information Centre. There is also an itinerary available entitled 'Days out cycling on the Painters' Trail' which is available free from The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project, call 01473 264263 or download an itinerary from: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
- **The Stour Valley Path** – A 60 mile route following the valley of the River Stour from Newmarket to the estuary at Cattawade. Priced £3.50, the guide is available from the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project. Tel: 01473 264263 or from the Flatford Visitor Information Centre.



Constable Country 'Keep it Special' guide

HOW TO GET THERE

By train

Manningtree station is on the London Liverpool Street to Norwich line linking to the major railway network to all parts of the UK. The journey time on One Railway services between London Liverpool Street and Manningtree is approximately 1 hour. Local train connections from Colchester, Ipswich and Harwich to Manningtree run regularly. For timetable information see the One Railway website: www.onerailway.com or telephone the One Railway Customer Service Centre on 0845 600 7245.

National Express Coaches

National Express operate services to Colchester, Harwich and Ipswich. Contact National Express on 08705 80 80 80 or visit www.nationalexpress.com for more information. From these destinations local bus and train services connect to Manningtree or Dedham.

Local bus services from Colchester

Colchester to Dedham

Services **87/87A** run Mondays to Saturdays from Colchester Bus Station to Dedham – limited frequency.
Service **247** on Mondays to Saturdays from Colchester Bus Station to Dedham.

Colchester to Dedham and Manningtree Service **102** on Sundays and Holiday Mondays from Colchester Bus Station – 7 services in each direction throughout the day. Service **96/96A** to Manningtree on Sundays and Public Holidays from Colchester Bus Station (infrequent service).

Colchester to East Bergholt Service **93, 93A** on Mondays to Saturdays from Colchester Bus Station to East Bergholt
Service **93** on Sundays and Public Holidays from Colchester Bus Station to Flatford & East Bergholt

Local bus services from Ipswich

Ipswich to East Bergholt Service **92, 92A, 93, 93A, 93B** on Mondays to Saturdays from Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station
Service **93** on Sundays and Holiday Mondays from Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station or Ipswich Rail Station to Flatford & East Bergholt.

Ipswich to Manningtree The most direct link is via One Railway train services from Ipswich to Manningtree – see Rail information above.
There are no direct buses on Mondays to Saturdays from Ipswich to Manningtree, but you can use Service **96** on Mondays to Saturdays from Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station or Ipswich Rail Station and alight at Cattawade, approximately ½ mile from Manningtree Rail Station. Service **96/96A** on Sundays & Holiday Mondays from Ipswich to Manningtree.

Demand responsive bus services

The Shotley Buzabout Car operates in some areas of the Dedham Vale, including East Bergholt and can be pre-booked for any journey within a specified area when no journey is possible on other bus services. The service is available every day. Bookings can be made up to 7 days in advance, but no later than a day in advance (or Friday for Monday travel). To book a journey, please call 0845 458 1920 (line open Monday-Fri 9-5). To see the area operated by the Buzabout see the website listed below for bus services in Suffolk. Note: no service available from/to Dedham.

For journey planners and more information on local bus services, visit www.traveline.org.uk
or Tel: 0870 608 2 608.

For bus services in Suffolk, visit www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/transport.
For bus services in Essex, visit www.essexcc.gov.uk/journeyplanner

THE CAR@FREE PROJECT:

The *CAReFREE* itineraries are designed to encourage visitors to explore and enjoy the special landscapes of the East of England with minimal impact on the environment, while generating positive benefits for local people. The itineraries give visitors exciting ideas about what to do in the area, by leaving their car at home or at their accommodation, and exploring the area by bike, boat, bus, horse or train.

The itineraries for each area can be found at the following websites:

ONE OF A SET OF
CAR FREE ITINERARIES
IN THE EAST OF
ENGLAND'S SPECIAL
LANDSCAPES

The Brecks

www.brecks.org

- Enjoy living on a working farm
- Horse riding breaks in and around Thetford Forest
- Biking and Brewing in Thetford Forest

The Broads

www.broads-authority.gov.uk

- Canoe Safaris
- Great ideas for discovering the best of the Broads by cycle
- Walks and sights of the Broads by train and bus

The Chilterns AONB

www.chilternsaonb.org

- Grand Union Canal and Tring Reservoirs
- North Chilterns Villages by Bicycle
- Walking and Cycling in the Northern Chilterns and Hitchin

Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

- A day walking through Constable Country
- Days out cycling on the Painters' Trail
- Exploring the Stour Valley on foot

Norfolk Coast AONB

www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk

- Exploring the Norfolk Coast Cycleway
- See the wildlife wonders of North Norfolk by bus
- Great ideas for making the most of the area by bus and train

Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

- A car free break in Southwold
- Exploring the Stour Estuary
- Woodbridge, Sutton Hoo and the Deben Estuary

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: If you are business in the one of these areas and would like to write your own itinerary to show visitors how to enjoy the area near you without using their car to get around, please contact us for further information.



For further information contact:

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Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project
c/o Suffolk County Council Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk IP1 2BX
Tel: 01473 264263
Fax: 01473 216824
paula.booth@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk
www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

The *CAReFREE* itineraries are funded by

